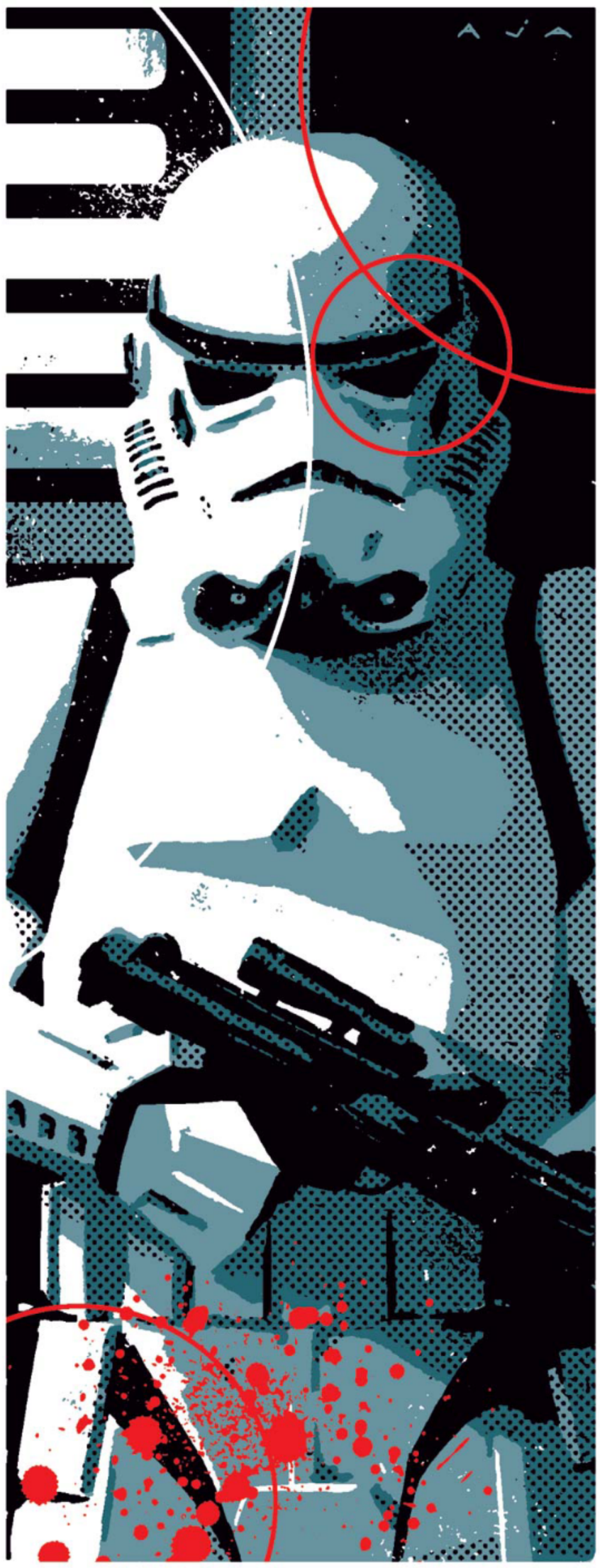
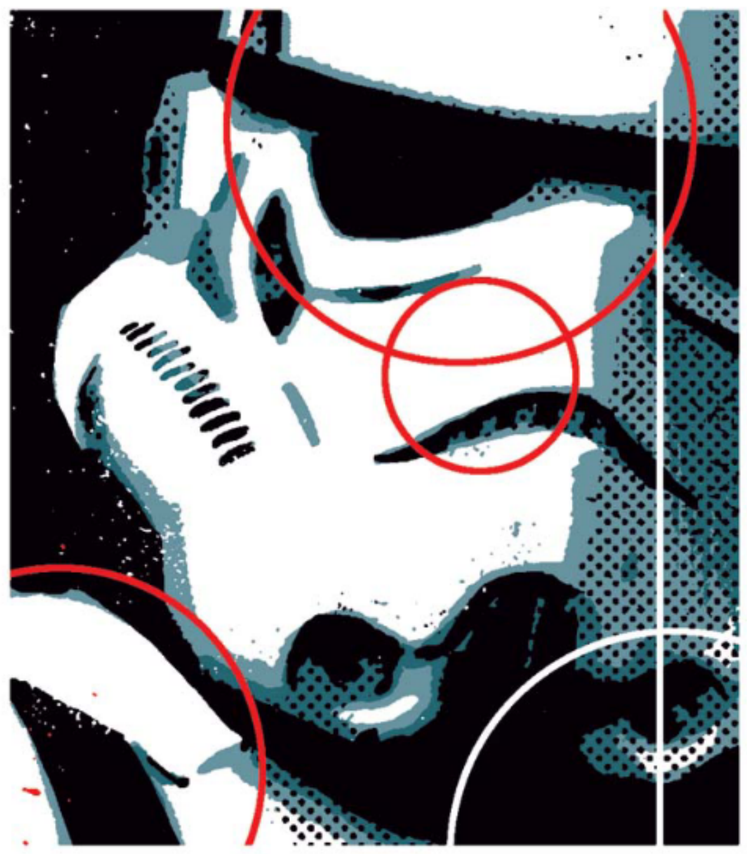
MARVEL

021

AARON
MOLINA
MILLA

STAR WARS®





Book V, Part I

THE LAST FLIGHT OF THE HARBINGER

It is a crucial time for the Empire. Rebel forces are proliferating across the galaxy, and their elimination is imperative for Imperial reign.

For a mission this vital, the right team is essential – an elite group of stormtroopers, hand-picked for their skills, loyalty to the Empire, and complete dedication to destroying the Rebellion.

Leading this team is the ruthless Sergeant Kreel – former undercover Imperial spy known as the Gamemaster and warden on the infamous smuggler's moon Nar Shaddaa – a man who answers directly to Darth Vader. Rebel pilot Luke Skywalker has evaded Sergeant Kreel's attacks once before, but he, and the rest of the Rebellion, have not seen the last of the Empire's wrath....

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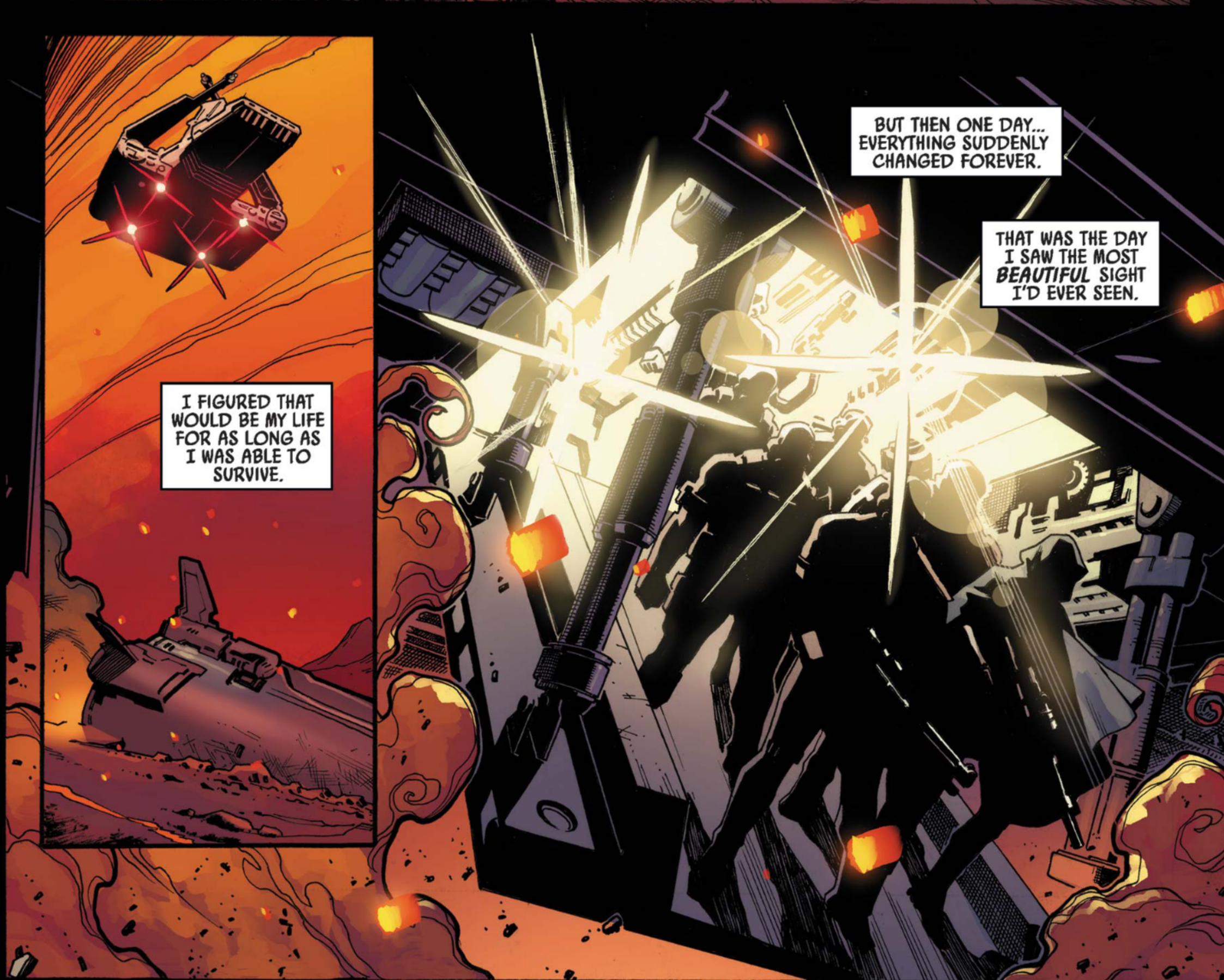
I WAS FOUR YEARS OLD THE FIRST TIME I SAW A MAN *DIE*.
I CRIED LIKE A BABY. THAT TIME AND AT LEAST THE NEXT DOZEN MORE.
THAT GOT THEM. THEY'RE GOING DOWN. GIVE 'EM ROOM TO CRASH.
TWO YEARS LATER, WHEN IT WAS MY OWN *FATHER* WHO WAS BEING MURDERED IN FRONT OF ME...
...I HAD NO MORE TEARS LEFT TO SHED.
A WEEK AFTER THAT, *I* WAS THE ONE DOING THE KILLING.

EVERYTHING ON MY HOMEWORLD OF CHAGAR IX REVOLVED AROUND THE *FIGHTING PITS.*
FOR THE PEOPLE RICH ENOUGH TO SIT IN THE STANDS...
...AND FOR THOSE OF US TOO POOR TO BUY OUR WAY OUT OF THE HOLE.


I FIGURED THAT WOULD BE MY LIFE FOR AS LONG AS I WAS ABLE TO SURVIVE.
BUT THEN ONE DAY... EVERYTHING SUDDENLY CHANGED FOREVER.
THAT WAS THE DAY I SAW THE MOST *BEAUTIFUL* SIGHT I'D EVER SEEN.

THE DAY I SAW MY FIRST STORMTROOPER.

NOTHING. THE REBELS CLEARED OUT.
DOUBT THEY HAD TIME TO BLOW THE COMPUTERS.
SEE IF YOU CAN GET SOMETHING OUT OF 'EM, MIC. WE NEED TO KNOW IF OUR TARGET IS REALLY ON BOARD. YOU AND SHRAP CATCH UP WHEN YOU CAN.
CAV, YOU GOT POINT. FIND THEIR TRAIL.

A DOZEN, AT LEAST. THEY SPLIT UP RIGHT AROUND HERE.
WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THIS BLASTED WORLD? WHERE ARE ALL THE PEOPLE?
IT'S THE GHOST MOON. WHOLE PLACE WAS EVACUATED YEARS AGO, WHEN THE ERUPTIONS STARTED.
NICE PLACE TO HIDE. IF YOU'RE A REBEL COWARD.
THEY'RE NOT HIDING.
THEY'RE LEADING US INTO AN AMBUSH.

MISTY, IF IT WAS *YOU*, WHERE WOULD YOU BE?
IF IT WAS ME, YOU'D ALL BE *DEAD* ALREADY.
LUCKY FOR US, REBEL SNIPERS ARE RUBBISH.

RUBBISH SNIPER'D PROBABLY BE RIGHT UP THERE. TOP FLOOR.
WE GO ANOTHER KLICK, HE'LL HAVE US IN RANGE.

CAV, WITH ME.
THE REST OF YOU, KEEP GOING, BUT STAY OUT OF RANGE.
IT'S A LONG WAY UP THERE, SARGE. TELL ME WE AREN'T TAKING THE STAIRS.
WE'RE *SPECIAL COMMANDO ADVANCED RECON*, AREN'T WE?

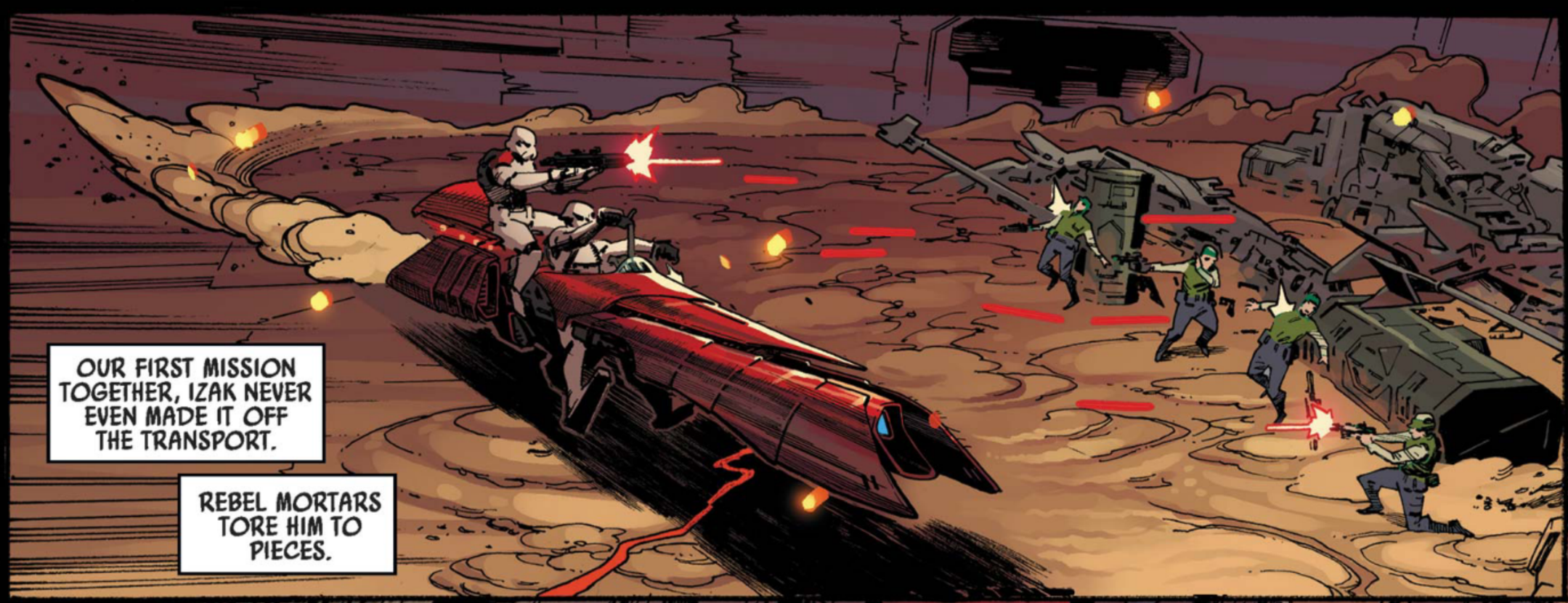
"SCAR TROOPERS DON'T NEED STAIRS."
BUCKETHEADS!
DEATH TO THE EMPIRE, YOU--
NOT TODAY, PAL.

MAY THE FORCE BE WITH ME! MAY THE FORCE BE--
CONTACT CONFIRMED. ONE SNAKE IN ITS HOLE.
ZUKE, HE'S ALL YOURS.
COPY THAT, SARGE.
SAYING HI NOW.

I WAS DOOMED TO DIE IN THE ARENA, JUST LIKE MY FATHER HAD. JUST LIKE MY MOTHER AND EVERYONE I'D EVER KNOWN.
UNTIL THE STORMTROOPERS CAME.
UNTIL THE EMPIRE MADE LIFE WORTH LIVING.
SCAR SQUAD, KEEP MOVING. FOLLOW THE SOUND OF THE BLASTER FIRE.
WHAT BLASTER FIRE, SARGE?

THE EMPIRE CAME TO CHAGAR IX AND TOPPLED THE OVERLORDS IN A DAY. THEY SHUT DOWN THE ARENAS.
THE EMPIRE GAVE MY PEOPLE JOBS. THEY GAVE US A PURPOSE. THEY GAVE US PEACE.
AERO!
HOT-WIRING. ALMOST GOT IT, SARGE.
AND AFTER BEING TURNED AWAY EVERY YEAR UNTIL I WAS OLD ENOUGH, THEY FINALLY GAVE ME SOMETHING EVEN GREATER.
I'VE BEEN WEARING IT WITH PRIDE EVER SINCE.

AT THE ACADEMY I MADE FRIENDS WITH A RANGER NAMED IZAK ANZIO. A FARMER'S BOY FROM AGAMAR WHO DREAMED OF SEEING THE GALAXY.
HE WAS THE ONLY FRIEND I'D EVER HAD.


OUR FIRST MISSION TOGETHER, IZAK NEVER EVEN MADE IT OFF THE TRANSPORT.
REBEL MORTARS TORE HIM TO PIECES.

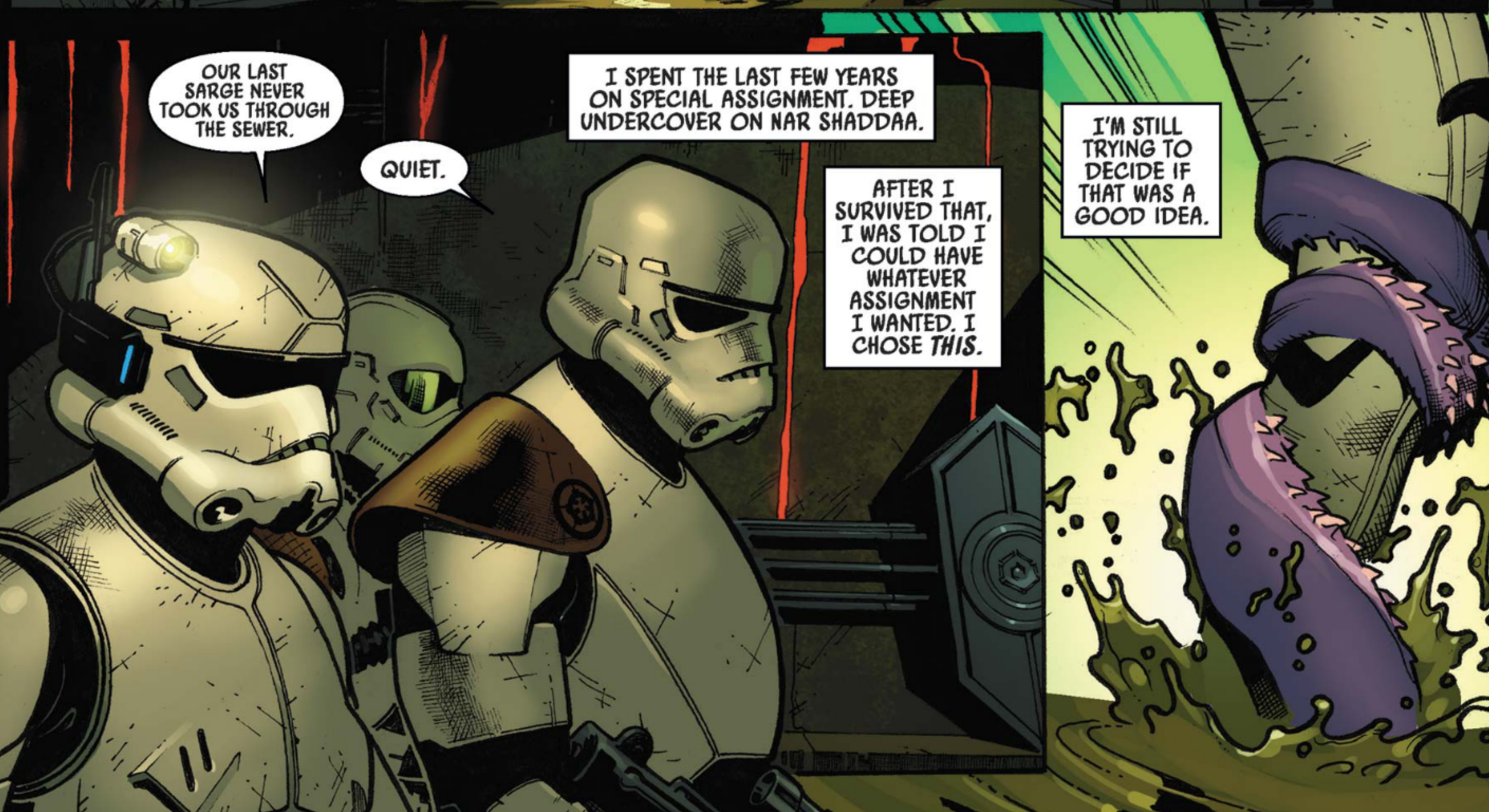
I KILLED EVERY REBEL I COULD FIND THAT DAY.
AND EVERY DAY SINCE.

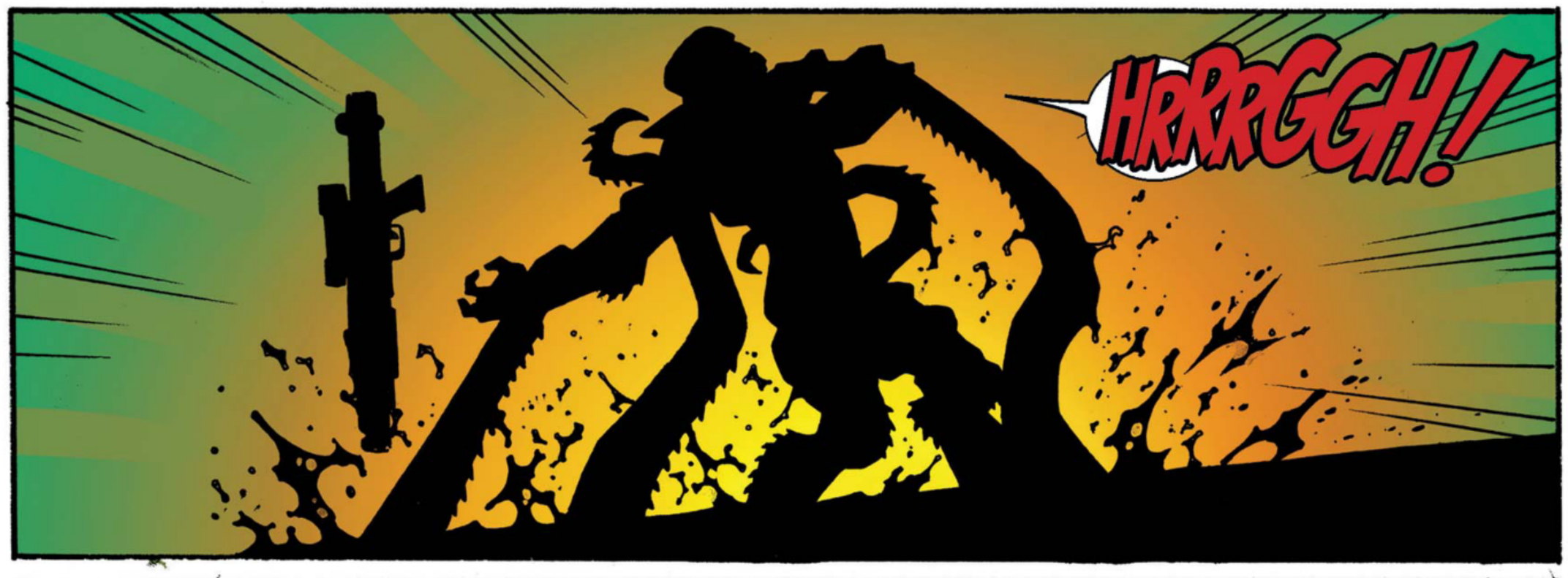
THE REBELS WANT YOU TO THINK THEY'RE FIGHTING FOR *FREEDOM*. DON'T BELIEVE A WORD OF THEIR *LIES*.
I NEVER KNEW FREEDOM EXISTED UNTIL THE EMPIRE CAME.
FREEDOM MEANS *LAW*. FREEDOM MEANS *ORDER*.
ALL THE REBELS WANT IS *CHAOS*.
AAAARRGGHH!
THEY THINK THAT MAKES THEM REVOLUTIONARIES. I HAVE ANOTHER WORD FOR THEM.
MY COUNT'S *EIGHT*. BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE OTHER--
TERRORISTS.

THE MISSION OF SCAR SQUADRON...
...A.K.A. TASK FORCE 99...
...IS TO ELIMINATE TERRORISTS.
PERMANENTLY.
AND WE'VE NEVER FAILED TO COMPLETE OUR MISSION.
AERO.
GET UP, WE GOTTA...
I DON'T ENVISION TODAY BEING ANY DIFFERENT.

IT'S A TIGHT-KNIT SQUAD, USED TO OPERATING ON ITS OWN IN THE MOST HOSTILE OF ENVIRONMENTS. EACH SOLDIER A SEASONED VET.
ZUKE.
NO CAN DO, SARGE. MY ROCKETS WON'T PIERCE THAT THING'S ARMOR.
GET ME CLOSE ENOUGH, AND I'LL BLOW IT.
UGH. I'M OKAY.
IF THERE'S AN OUTSIDER IN THE BUNCH, IT'S ME.
FALL BACK.
WHAT?! ARE YOU CRAZY? WE DON'T--
I SAID, FALL BACK.

"TO THE NEAREST SEWAGE TUNNEL."


OUR LAST SARGE NEVER TOOK US THROUGH THE SEWER.
QUIET.
I SPENT THE LAST FEW YEARS ON SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT. DEEP UNDERCOVER ON NAR SHADDAA.
AFTER I SURVIVED THAT, I WAS TOLD I COULD HAVE WHATEVER ASSIGNMENT I WANTED. I CHOSE THIS.
I'M STILL TRYING TO DECIDE IF THAT WAS A GOOD IDEA.


HRRRGGH!

SARGE!
WAIT.

THEIR LAST SERGEANT WAS WITH THEM FOR YEARS. THEY'RE STILL WAITING FOR ME TO PROVE MYSELF.

RRRRRRRGHH!

KEEP MOVING.
STILL GOT A WAYS TO GO, SARGE. WHAT ABOUT THE--
JUST FOLLOW ME.

OR WAITING FOR ME TO *DIE*.
AND TRY TO KEEP UP.

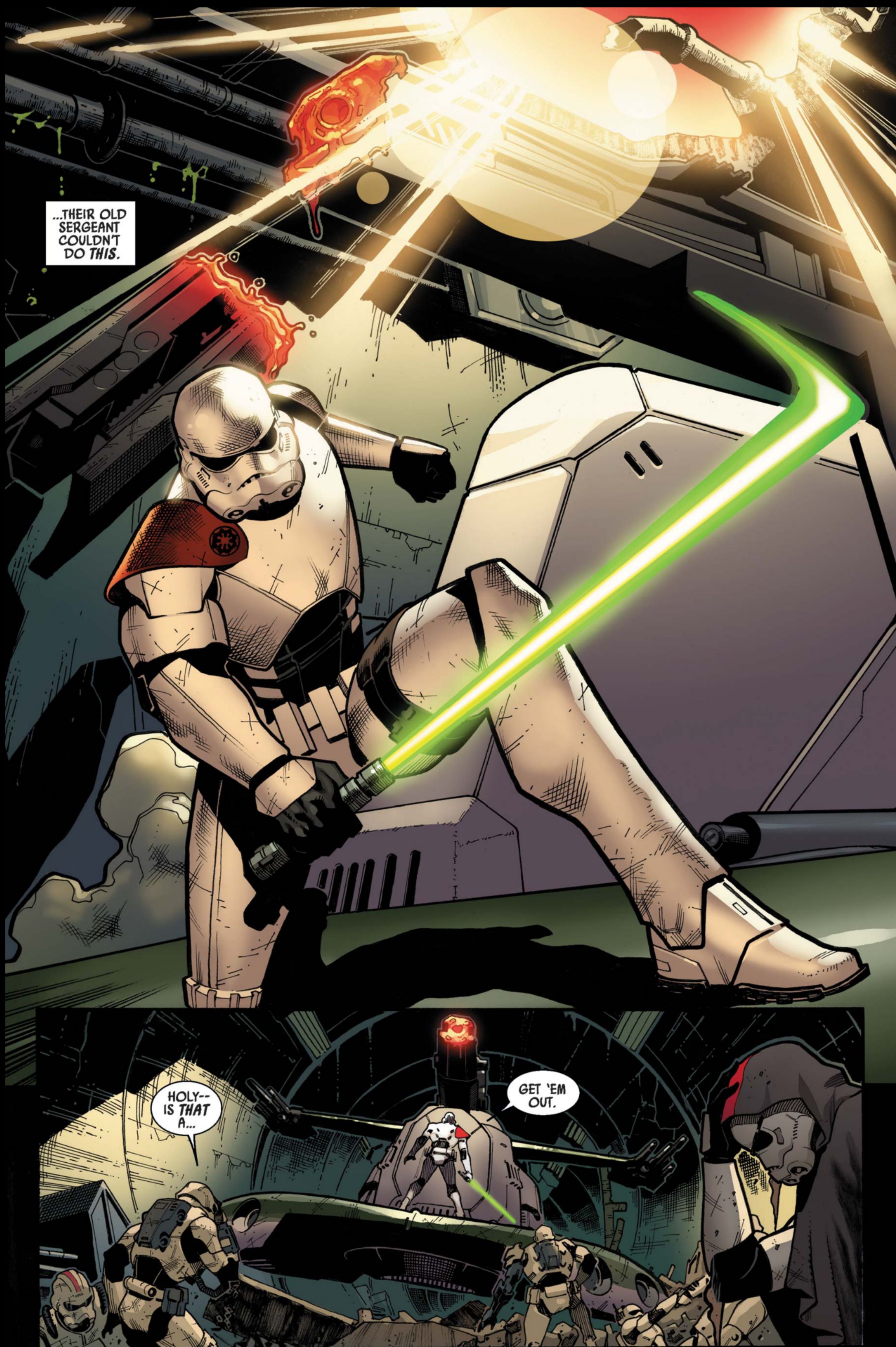
NO SIGN OF THEM UP TOP. SEE ANYTHING DOWN THERE YET?
NEGATIVE, SIR. MAYBE THE TRASH SQUIDS GOT THEM. SHOULD WE--

THEY'RE IN THE SEWERS! TAKE US DOWN!
LOOK OUT!
SARGE, WHERE THE BLAZES ARE YOU--

AAAAARRGHH!

I'VE NEVER TALKED TO THE OTHERS ABOUT WHERE I'VE BEEN, ABOUT MY CHILDHOOD IN THE ARENA, MY TIME UNDERCOVER.

THEY DON'T KNOW THAT I PICKED UP A FEW SPECIAL SKILLS ALONG THE WAY.
SOMETHING TELLS ME...


...THEIR OLD SERGEANT COULDN'T DO THIS.
HOLY-- IS THAT A...
GET 'EM OUT.

RUN, SIR! I'LL--
GAAGGHH!
ELEVEN AND... TWELVE. HELLO, ADMIRAL.
SITREP.
A FEW TROOPERS'LL HAVE SOME NICE, NEW SCARS. BUT WE'RE ALL STILL BREATHING.
MIC SAYS IT'LL TAKE A FEW MORE DAYS TO CRACK THE ENCRYPTION ON THEIR SHIP'S COMPUTERS.
YEAH, WELL, SOMETHING TELLS ME IT WON'T TAKE QUITE SO LONG...

...TO CRACK HIM.
WILL IT, SQUAD?
NO, SIR.
NOT SO LONG AT ALL.